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*This collection of ornamental ironwork, including pieces produced by the Jones Iron Works of Buffalo, has been donated to the Society by Milton G. Wolfe. This catalog is made possible by a donation from Milton G. Wolfe.*

*Front Cover: Baroque section of a panel of forged and welded iron and aluminum. Designed and fabricated by Jones Iron Works.*

*Above: Door hinge cut from 3/4 inch steel plates.*

*Opposite: Ship pattern, hammered copper sheet.*



# THE MILTON G. WOLFE COLLECTION OF DECORATIVE IRONWORK



THE  
BUFFALO  
HISTORY  
MUSEUM

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## IRONWORK

"Iron accommodates itself to all our wants, our desires, and even our caprices. It is equally serviceable to the Arts, the Sciences, to Agriculture, and War. The same ore furnishes the sword, the ploughshare, the scythe, the pruning hook, the needle, the graver, the spring of a watch or of a carriage, the chisel, the chain, the anchor, the compass, the cannon, and the bomb. It is a medicine of much virtue, and the only metal friendly to the human frame."

—John Wilkeson, 1864

Until 1826, iron manufacturing in Buffalo was limited to blacksmithing, and to objects needed in everyday life, such as plows, horseshoes, axes, etc. At that time, there were six blacksmith shops and an unknown number of smiths. Soon a number of foundries and machine shops opened, such as Messrs. Beals, Mayhew and Co. on Ohio and Indiana Streets, manufacturers of Buffalo's first steam engines. By 1832, the year that Buffalo was incorporated, there were 44 smiths and 10 founders/casters of metal.

By the winter of 1859-60, Buffalo was in a financial depression. Lake commerce and navigation interests had been deteriorating for some time. Also, there was a need for winter employment to augment the businesses dependent upon the lake trade.

The answer was to be found in the Western Great Lakes, Ohio, and Pennsylvania:

"The discovery of numerous inexhaustible deposits of iron ores in Northern Michigan, and their successful use in the blast furnaces of Eastern Ohio, and the opening of canal and railroad communications with the anthracite coal fields of Pennsylvania, led some of our citizens who were familiar with iron smelting, to the conclusion that no place in all the Lake basin was so favorable for the prosecution of that great branch of human industry, as our city."

John Wilkeson, 1864

Soon great iron boats transported iron ore from Lake Superior across the great lakes to the Buffalo forges. The industry was underway. When pure iron is smelted with elements such as carbon, silicon, manganese, phosphorous, and sulphur, a highly useful product is produced.

*Above: Design used on a railing.*

*Opposite: One panel of forged and welded iron and aluminum. Designed and fabricated by Jones Iron Works.*







*Above: Detail of veranda cornice with grape design.*

*Right: Wall sconce for candles, wrought iron.*



## METALS USED

**COMMERCIAL SOFT STEEL OR IRON** was made up into squares, rounds, rectangular flats and sheets of various sizes and thicknesses which were used by the trade for most general applications.

**GENUINE WROUGHT IRON** was used sparingly, and only when specified. This type of material was only available in Sweden. Today, genuine wrought iron is used less and less or not at all.

**CAST IRON** is molten metal poured into sand. This is quite brittle, and should only be used ornamentally where no stress or strain occurs.

**MALLEABLE IRON** is cast iron put into an electric furnace, heated to a high temperature, and cooled gradually. This material can be forged and is much stronger than plain cast iron.

**STAINLESS STEEL** was practically impossible to heat and forge when first brought out in the 30s or 40s because the stainless qualities were lost in processing. Today, stainless steel can be forged and welded without losing the stainless qualities.

**COPPER, BRONZE, AND ALUMINUM** have been used. If care was taken in getting the right type of metal, they could be forged, welded, or cast.

Before these metals were rolled in mills, all of these shapes had to be hand forged. This led to the custom of trying to imitate the finish by hammering the rolled sections, heating slightly after applying beeswax, and bringing out the highlights by sandpapering. No paint was required in this process.

*Right: "Brass pattern" rail design, Japanese motif.*





*Above: Ornament used on a railing.*

*Above, right: Large cathedral door hinge cut from ¼ inch steel plates with ball-bearing hinge.*

*Bottom: Door handle, wrought iron.*

*Opposite: Pair of English andirons. Designed and fabricated by Jones Iron Works. "Parherized" with special rustproof finish.*









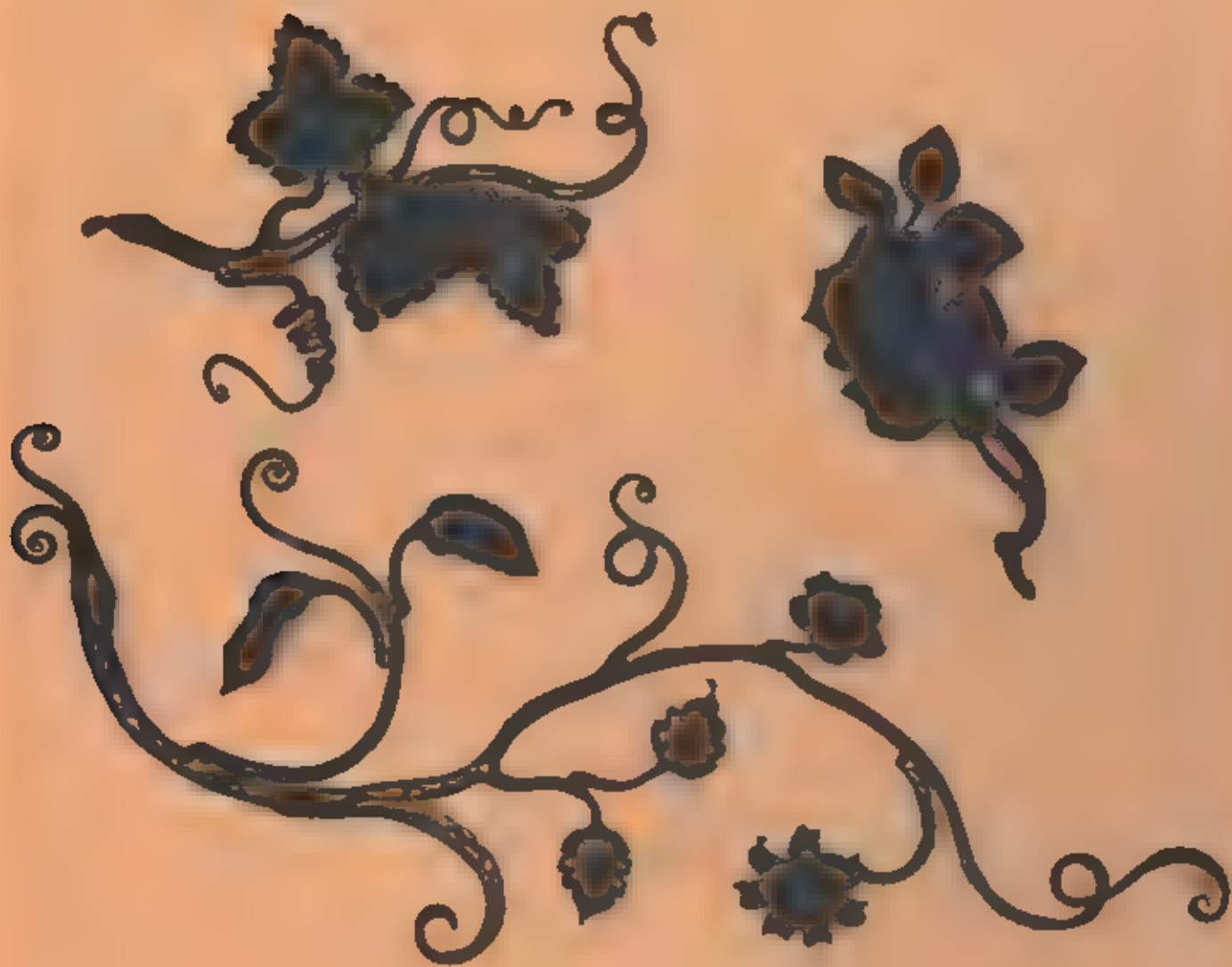


*Opposite, left Fireplace tools including brush, shovel, poker, and tongs. "Parkerized" with special rustproof finish. Designed and fabricated by Jones Iron Works. Center. Three-legged twisted flower pot stand. Designed and fabricated by Jones Iron Works. Right Floor-type ashtray Designed and fabricated by Jones Iron Works. One match box and three cigars arranged for glass or metal tray.*

*Above Left-hand porch rail bracket, cast iron pattern.*

*Bottom Bronze ornament applied to metal panels.*







## THE JONES IRON WORKS

In 1815, The Jones Iron Works began operations to provide Buffalo's early settlers with the much needed metal tools and ironwork for the building of homes and businesses in the early village. Early Buffalo directories list the George Jones Iron Rail Factory on Ellicott Street and later the Jones Iron Works on Lower Terrace. From 1925-35, the business was located on Efner Street, and at 1200 Niagara Street from 1935 till its closing in 1941.

Avery C. Wolfe became associated with the firm in 1902. His son, Merton G., joined the company in 1922 and was its president at the time of its liquidation in 1941. His brothers Royce and Spencer also worked in the business.

Even though the Great Depression of the 1930s reduced the number of its employees, the Jones Iron Works undertook the construction of the driveway

gates and fence at the White Chapel Cemetery on Niagara Falls Boulevard, for which cemetery lots were given in payment. A few of the company's best metalworking personnel were called back to help complete this work.

The firm's reputation for fine artistic wrought iron was well known by architects, and many types of light iron, sheet metal, stairs, and other ornamental work were manufactured for construction of industrial buildings. Some were the Huntley Station, grain elevators constructed by Monarch Engineering

*Opposite: Imitation flower designs, wrought iron. Designed and fabricated by Jones Iron Works.*

*Above: Detail of rose pattern. Designed and fabricated by Jones Iron Works.*



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Company, substations for the Buffalo General Electric Corporation, and fire resistant buildings erected by the Larkin Company. In the early 1900s when the H. M. Esty home and others were erected in the Larkin Block all the wrought iron was furnished by the Jones Iron Works.

Facing another period of government restrictions during World War II and the possibility of unionization, the management liquidated the company with no losses.

"Every person knows the manifold uses of this truly precious metal. It is capable of being cast in molds of any form, of being drawn out in wires of any desired strength or fineness, of being extended into plates or sheets, of being bent in every direction, of being sharpened, hardened, and softened at pleasure."

—John Wilkeson, in  
quoting a Dr. Ure in  
England, early 1800s.

*Opposite One section of very ornamental stair railing in the residence of Mrs. E. L. Miller, presently The Nichols School, Nottingham Campus. With bronze finial and newel post from the George Rand home, 1929-30. Hand forged bird, flowers, stems, and leaves, Bley & Lyman, Architects.*

*Left Closeup of section of stair railing on opposite page.*



## THE COLLECTION

Pair of English Andirons. Designed and fabricated by Jones Iron Works (J.I.W.). Special Parkerized rustproof finish.  
Floor-type ashtray. Designed and fabricated by J.I.W. One matchbox and three cigars, arranged for glass or metal tray.  
Brass bar, 10 in. x 1 1/4 in. dia. Chiseled design on bronze newel base.

2 brass handrail brackets, 1 polished, 1 unpolished.

1 right-hand and 1 left-hand cast iron pattern porch rail brackets

2 cast iron finial base caps for rail ends.

Pair candleholders for 5 candles.

Small wrought iron candlestick

4 aluminum castings. Used in ornamental grill between stairhall and conservatory, Charles Penny, Tudor Place

2 rough brass castings. Finials for rails or balconies.

2 cast iron collars 1 1/4 in. dia. for 5/8 in. dia. bars.

1 display panel with steel backing, burlap covering, and steel moulding. Mounted on panel are 1 bronze finial, 4 door handles and escutcheons, 4 hammered rosettes.

1 display panel similar to above with 1 bronze finial, 2 rose forgings, 1 grape, and 1 lily

1 display panel similar with 1 bronze finial, numerous different leaf forgings, and special scrolls with leaf design

1 aluminum finial, 2 in. dia. with 1 1/8 in. dia. base and 4 in. tall 1 similar but 5 in. tall

Brass finial for Statler Restaurant railing or mezzanine ground floor, Elbeeth Square.

Finial, brass casting, 3 1/2 in. high

12-grated brass fence finials

2 brass finials, job unknown

2 flame finials. Wood patterns — 22, 3 1/4 in. high, 1 5/8 in. dia.

base; 22A, 3 1/2 in. high, 1 1/4 in. base

5-gated bronze finial pattern with 1 complete casting.

5-gated bronze finial, 1 1/4 in. dia. ball x 2 1/4 in. tall

Bronze finial with square base.

Bronze finial with round base, finished and polished, 1 same unfinished, rough casting

Wood finial Pattern 22, 4 in. high with 1/4 in. dia. top on 1 1/4 in. dia. base.

Wood finial. Pattern, 4 in. high with 12-sided top on 7/8 in. square base

Wood finial pattern 13, 4 in. high with 1 1/8 in. dia. ball on 1 1/4 in. dia. base.

Wood finial pattern, 6 1/2 in. high

Wood finial pattern 7, 7 1/4 in. high with 2 1/4 in. dia. on 1 3/8 in. dia. base

Wood finial, smooth and turned, 8 in. high

2-piece fireplace set. 1 trident fork, 1 poker, Twisted ends, made of 2 1/4 in. dia. pieces placed side by side.

Floor lamp, 18 in. base x 5 ft. 6 in. tall Electrified Designed and fabricated by J.I.W.

Flower pot stand, three-legged, twisted. Designed and fabricated by J.I.W.

3 grilles, cast iron. 1 from 2nd floor bedroom window of Royce Home, Utica, NY, 1 from Albion, NY, 1 location unknown.

Right and left door handles, wrought iron.

Door handle, wrought iron.

Gargoyle head, cast iron.

Lion's head, aluminum. Pattern in four sections. Blessed Trinity R.C. Church.

2 large cathedral door hinges, 1 cut from 1/4 in. steel plates with

ball bearing hinge. 1 similar to above but different pattern.  
 Brass window shutter hinges.  
 Iron sheet, 8 in. x 3 in. with chiseled flower design.  
 Stamped or hammered ornament, incised.  
 2 aluminum ornaments. 6 pointed stars with threaded studs.  
 7 brass center ornaments, 1 1/4 in. dia.  
 2 brass center ornaments. Approximately same size but slightly different design.  
 Brass rail ornament, job unknown.  
 3 bronze ornaments applied to metal panels. Leaf design continues around the circles.  
 Bronze center ornament with foliation design, 1/4 in. dia. top with base 1/2 in. x 3/5 in.  
 Bronze ornament. Trefoil design with 3/4 in. diagonal dia. base.  
 Imitation flower design ornament in wrought iron.  
 Sample ornament wrought iron leaf.  
 Spindle ornament. Lead pattern.  
 Wrought iron rosette ornament. Sheet iron with acorn bolt.  
 Rose ornament designed and fabricated by J.I.W.  
 Ship ornament for floor stand ashtray, silhouette, brass sheet.  
 Spindle ornament, brass pattern.  
 Panel, forged and welded iron and aluminum. Designed and fabricated by J.I.W.  
 Complete pattern for ornate finial, approx. 3 in. dia. 7 in. x 13 in. brass layout plate arranged with 3 in. dia. body.  
 Separate wood plate with two small top patterns. Separate base pattern.  
 4 lead patterns, job unknown.  
 Lead pattern of bird, 1 casting of same, Harry Ramsdell Res.  
 Lead pattern 1 1/4 in. dia. fence and gate picket end.  
 2 lead patterns for handles at White Chapel Cemetery.  
 Lead pattern. Gargoyle head for grill, Harry Ramsdell Res.  
 Ship pattern, hammered copper sheet.  
 2 panels, 1 right and 1 left, made especially for an "Art In Industry" Exhibit at Albright Art Gallery with Flower Pot Pans. Designed and fabricated by J.I.W.  
 2 panels, samples. Wrought iron. 1 open and 1 closed solid.  
 Wrought iron panel, sample.  
 Porch panel posts, grape design. For cast iron.  
 5-gated pattern for 1/4 in. dia. spindles. Also pattern G-36.  
 3-gated with 1 1/4 in. dia. base.  
 4 gated brass rosette pattern.  
 Cast iron rosette pattern.  
 Rosette wood pattern, 5 in. round x 1/4 in. thick.  
 3 square rosette wood pattern. One 4 1/4 in. x 1/4 in. thick with 3 5/8 in. dia. with floral design on 3/16 in. plate; one 4 in. x 1/4 in. thick; one 2 1/4 in. x 1/4 in. thick for 5/8 in. dia. bar.  
 Oval rosette wood pattern, 3 1/4 in. x 2 in. x 3/8 in.



*Above: Grape design used on a railing.*

*Bottom: Pair of candleholders, wrought iron.*

*Opposite: Ornament used on a railing.*





2 split, finial patterns. One  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in. high with  $7/8$  in. dia. base, pattern 3.

One 6 in. high with  $7/8$  in. dia. base.

2 wood patterns with angle base; different size bases.

2 wood patterns for newel cap for hand rail. One 4 in. x 6 in.; one 5 in. x 7 in.

Wood pattern for center ornament of railing, 3 in. dia. and 1 in. deep. Panel to accommodate two bronze castings. Cross spindles.

Wood and plaster of Paris candlestick. Pattern in two parts.

Wood base for same. All for casting in aluminum. Patterns made from original pair from Paris Hill, NY.

21 framed photographs. Ironwork at various locations in the area.

Altar rail, one section. Forged iron, chisel tooling. Cast bronze fleur-de-lis scroll ends and bronze post shoes. Also cast bronze angels in altar rail gates. From St. Joseph's R.C. Church, 3260-75 Main Street.

"Brass" pattern rail design. Japanese motif.

2 "gated" brass rails. Spindle pattern, 24 in. high. Also similar pattern, 15 in. high.

Porch rails, cast iron pattern.

Interior stair railing. George Rand Res.

Railing. Cast iron pattern.

Interior stair railing. Edwin Lang Miller Res. Original owner, Spencer Kellogg, Jr.

Interior stair railing. G. Forman Res. J. N. Byers, General Contractor.

Section of very ornamental stair railing. Hand forged bird, flowers, stems and leaves. Bley & Lyman, Architects. Mrs. E. L. Miller Res. Presently The Nichols School, Nottingham Campus. With bronze finial and newel post from the George Rand home, 1929-30.

Railing details for Stella Niagara.

Bronze railing pattern.

Bronze "Lamb's Tongue" for hand rail. Purchased item from J. G. Braun & Co.

2 square rosettes with hole for square spindles.

4 gated smaller rosettes.

2 rosettes, cast iron castings.

1 rosette, aluminum casting.

Portable foot scraper, painted red. Designed and fabricated by J.I.W.

Stationary foot scraper set in masonry. Designed and fabricated by J.I.W.

Bronze scroll of  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. x  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. material.

5 brass shoes.

8 brass shoes, rectangular shape,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. x 1 in. overall for  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. x  $3/8$  in. spindles.

2 brass shoes for  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. dia. bars.

10 brass shoes for  $5/8$  in. dia. bars.

20 brass shoes, 1 in. dia. x  $3/8$  in. for  $5/8$  in. dia. bars.

20 brass collars for same.

Bronze spindle shoes.

6 cast iron shoes.

2 cast iron shoes for  $5/8$  in. dia. bars.

3 half shoes for  $1\frac{1}{8}$  in. dia. newels.

Golf Club sign, "Silhouette" steel, Niagara Falls Country Club. Designed and painted by Daniel Lockwood Rumsey.

Jones Iron Works sign. Designed and fabricated by J.I.W.

Matching fire place tools including brush, shovel, poker, and tongs with special finish. Designed and fabricated by J.I.W.

Wall sconce for candles, wrought iron.

*Above: Ornament used on a railing.*

*Opposite: Wrought iron gate, Truman G. Avery Res. on The Circle. Site of Kleinhans Music Hall.*

*Back Cover: Steel ship ornament from floor-type ashtray.*





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